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No. 2

# REPORT

OF THE

# RETRENCHMENT COMMITTEE.

COMMITTEE ROOM, NOV 22, 1841.

*To the Hon the Speaker of the House of Representatives*

The Committee on Retrenchment, to whom was assigned the duty of enquiring into the expenditures of the Government, with a view to ascertain how far and in what manner, the same may be curtailed, beg leave, respectfully, to

## REPORT,

That they have had the same under consideration, so far as relates to the expenditures for the Civil Department, with the exception of Foreign Missions, and the collection of the various revenues of the country, and are of the opinion that so far as their investigations have proceeded, a material reduction may be made.

It is deemed unnecessary, and perhaps foreign to the duties of this Committee, to enquire into the various causes which have concurred in reducing our Government to its present embarrassed and bankrupt condition Equally unnecessary is it deemed to revert to the past with a view to censure or approve the various objects of national expenditure for which acts of appropriation have been passed by Congress, or to institute an examination by which to test the faithfulness with which the national funds have been disbursed upon their legitimate objects. Whatever may have been the causes which have brought us to that condition; whether it has sprung from an original miscalculation of our national resources, or disappointed expectations of

[illegible] exhibit to the world, too obvious to be [illegible] and too painful and mortifying not to be felt by [illegible] the spectacle of a *bankrupt Government, and an impoverished people!* We have demonstrated to the world [illegible] ability to establish an independent government [illegible] more difficult problem, or [illegible] peculiar character of [illegible] The world has acknowledged the form [illegible] the state of depression to which every [illegible] with [illegible] have been [illegible] regret—we look to an [illegible] a people destitute of [illegible] Year after year [illegible] appropriations have been [illegible] Shall we [illegible] Shall we [illegible] Shall we [illegible] our career of [illegible] [illegible] and return to that simplicity and economy which alone can lead us to prosperity and happiness. We have lived

upon credit which we have propped up by expedients and contrivances, until human ingenuity can devise no shift by which we can lengthen it up any longer, and it is time that we should make a virtue of necessity, and rely alone upon our resources for the future.

The first great and primary object to be accomplished is the restoration of confidence in our government among our own people, the second is the restoration of the confidence of other nations in the speedy and effective use of government. Neither of these can ever be attained, we fear, so long as expenditures within the limits of constitutional power—and for which responsibility are concentrated in one department of the Government—until energy and economy are substituted in our expenditures—until the constitutional power of government is restricted to the word and letter of its grant, and the process extended, and to operations which the public can see, and the people feel. We wants and the people. Nor are these the most important [illegible] grounds urged for such practice [illegible] upon paper and [illegible] in practice, [illegible] and the people al[illegible] and [illegible] expectations of [illegible] at the same time exhausted the hopes of our best friends abroad, whatever of cheering hope for our success has been left by [illegible] and prodigality. Every [illegible] to the people, to ourselves, and to [illegible] undertaking with united counsels [illegible] And in the discouragements by which we are surrounded we have every thing to hope for the future, from [illegible] energy and perseverance, and in advancing to the task of endeavoring to [illegible] the energies and resources of our country, that recuperative principle which they are so capable of receiving. Let our motto be, an union of all heads for our country's good, a union of all hearts for our country's honor."

Impelled by these considerations, your committee beg leave to recommend,

1st. That every office not absolutely necessary to carry on the business of the Government be abolished—and where the duties of those that are necessary, are not such as to engage the attention of vigilant and industrious incumbents, that their duties be blended with others, so as to make them offices of labor instead of pleasure.

2d That the salaries of all public agents and officers be adjusted upon a scale proportioned to the pecuniary capacity of the country and to the amount of skill and labor requisite to the performance of their official duties.

3d. That a more simple, cheap and efficient mode of collecting the revenues of the country be adopted, by which the accountability of collecting officers shall be made more direct and immediate; because every dollar expended in the collection of the revenues is a tax upon the people, and to that extent weakens and lessens their ability to contribute to the support of the Government

With a view to carry out the first of these recommendations, the Committee beg leave to introduce the accompanying bill and recommend its passage

WM. E JONES, Ch'm.
W N PORTER,
P USHER,
R. M. WILLIAMSON,
A. J. FOWLER,
N H. DARNELL.

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